

Native Trees of the Sonoran Desert Region – a Review of Growth Habits and Landscape Uses

The Sonoran Desert Region is a biologically diverse area covering portions of Arizona and California in the U.S. and Baja California, Baja California Sur, and Sonora, in Mexico. Encompassing arid deserts, high mountains and the northernmost tropical forests in the Western Hemisphere, the region includes over 390 species of native trees and tree-like plants. Some of these are widely grown for landscaping in mid and low-elevation areas of Arizona and others show potential for wider use in areas to which they are adapted. These trees offer a variety of forms, textures and colors for the landscape palette as well as providing a regional sense of place.

Legumes – workhorses of the desert landscape

Acacia constricta Whitethorn acacia
Acacia farnesiana Sweet acacia
Acacia greggii Catclaw acacia
Acacia occidentalis Tree catclaw
Acacia willardiana Palo blanco
Erythrina flabelliformis Southwest coral bean
Eysenhardtia orthocarpa Kidneywood
Havardia mexicana Mexican ebony
Lysiloma watsonii Feather tree
Olneya tesota Desert ironwood,
Parkinsonia florida Blue palo verde
Parkinsonia microphylla Foothill palo verde
Parkinsonia praecox Palo brea
Prosopis glandulosa var. *torreyana* Western honey mesquite
Prosopis pubescens Screwbean
Prosopis velutina Velvet mesquite
Psoralea arguta Desert smoketree

Some other trees – common and not so common

Chilopsis linearis Desert willow
Celtis reticulata Netleaf hackberry
Sapindus drummondii Western soapberry
Fraxinus gooddingii Goodding's ash
Sabal uresana Sonoran palmetto

Oaks and a juniper – trees for mid-elevation landscapes

Juniperus coahuilensis Rose-fruited juniper

Quercus arizonica Arizona white oak

Quercus chihuahuensis Chihuahua oak

Quercus coccolobifolia Encino manzano

Quercus emoryi Emory oak

Quercus mcvaughii Encino roble

Quercus oblongifolia Mexican blue oak

Quercus tarahumara Handbasin oak

Quercus toumeyii Toumey oak

Quercus viminea Madrean willow oak

Unique trees for warm microclimates – hold the frost please

Bursera fagaroides var. *elongata* Fragrant elephant tree

Bursera microphylla Littleleaf elephant tree

Fouquieria macdougalii Tree ocotillo

Fouquieria diguetii Tree ocotillo

Pachyciormus discolor Baja elephant tree